

CHRIS VAN HOLLEN
8TH DISTRICT, MARYLAND

COMMITTEE ON
WAYS AND MEANS

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND
GOVERNMENT REFORM

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

April 29, 2010

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The Honorable John S. Tanner
Chairman
Subcommittee on Trade
House Committee on Ways and Means
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Tanner,

Thank you and Ranking Member Brady for holding today's hearing on US/Cuba policy. I am attending the funeral of civil rights leader Dorothy Height and regret that I cannot be there in person.

As you know, a constituent of mine, Alan Gross, was arrested and imprisoned without charge by the Cuban government on December 3, 2009. For the last five months, Mr. Gross has only been permitted to communicate with his family a handful of times. He is 60 years old and suffers from chronic physical ailments and we are concerned about how the conditions of his confinement may be impacting his health. Additionally, his 86-year old mother's health has begun to deteriorate in the wake of her son's incarceration.

Mr. Gross visited Cuba as part of a USAID contract to help Cuba's Jewish community improve its ability to communicate with other Jews—both in and outside of Cuba. He has worked on international development issues for over 25 years and has devoted his career to helping thousands of people around the world.

Mr. Gross' incarceration is a matter of the greatest concern to the U.S. government, including Members of Congress. Attached is a letter from a bipartisan group of Members of Congress to the Cuban government calling for his immediate and unconditional release. The letter further states that Mr. Gross' arrest has caused many to doubt the Cuban government's expressed desire to improve relations with the United States.

I welcome any suggestions of the witnesses, either on or off the record, as to the best way to resolve this urgent matter. I appreciate your assistance in this matter and ask that this letter, and the accompanying letter to the Cuban government, be entered into the record.

Sincerely,



Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 19, 2010

Mr. Jorge Bolanos
Chief of Mission
Cuban Interest Section
Embassy of Switzerland
2639 16th Street NW
Washington, DC 20009

Dear Mr. Bolanos,

We wish to convey our serious concern regarding the arrest and continued imprisonment by your government of an American citizen, Alan P. Gross. We urge the Cuban Government to immediately release Mr. Gross from custody and return him to his family in the United States.

Mr. Gross was arrested in Havana on December 3, 2009. It is our understanding that at the time of his arrest, Mr. Gross was in Cuba to help the Jewish community improve their ability to communicate with Jews, both in Cuba and overseas. He was working pursuant to a U.S. government contract. Mr. Gross's work in Cuba emanated from his desire to make a positive impact for others of his faith on the island.

Mr. Gross is a social worker and a humanitarian. He has worked in development for over 25 years in more than 50 countries, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Haiti, the West Bank, and Gaza. He has devoted his career to helping thousands of people around the world. Mr. Gross is 60 years old and we are concerned for his health, which we understand has worsened recently. In addition, his 86-year old mother's health has begun to deteriorate rapidly in the past few weeks, due to her son's incarceration. The Gross family, including his wife and two daughters, miss him terribly and are struggling to get through this ordeal.

The arrest and imprisonment of Mr. Gross is viewed with great consternation by the government of the United States, including both Democrat and Republican Members of the United States Congress, whether liberal or conservative. It has caused many to doubt your government's expressed desire to improve relations with the United States. We cannot assist in that regard while Mr. Gross is detained in a Cuban prison. We urge you in the strongest possible terms to immediately and unconditionally release Mr. Gross and allow him to return to his family in the United States.

Sincerely,



Chris Van Hollen



Steny H. Hoyer

Les Capps

John W Olover
Eric Chaffee

Joe Sestak

John A. Brini

John Culberson

Pat Weil

Tim Ryan

Bill Foster

Nush Holt

Edward J. Markey

Eliot L. Engel

Shirley Jackson Lee

Pete Sessions

Larry L. Allen

John Lehner
The Hon

C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger

Donald Cookson

Lamar Smith

Bill Parnell Jr.

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R. P. J. J. J.

A. M. S. S.

Mr. J. J. J.

Leonard Lance

Paul B. Torke

J. M. J. (IL-19)

Elijah E. Turnings

Ch. A. W. W.

Van Hollen; Elijah E. Cummings; Sheila Jackson-Lee; John Shimkus; Michael T. McCaul; Al Green; Kenny Marchant; John W. Olver; Gene Green; W. Todd Akin; Jason Chaffetz; Jan Schakowsky; John Culberson; Tim Ryan; Paul D. Tonko; John A. Boccieri; Bill Pascrell; Rush Holt; Brian Higgins; Dutch Ruppersberger; Rodney Frelinghuysen; Edolphus "Ed" Towns; Anna G. Eshoo; Ed Markey; Jesse L. Jackson, Jr.; Peter Welsh; Ted Poe; Bill Foster; Aaron Schock; Charlie Wilson; Gary Ackerman; Lamar Smith; Steny Hoyer; Joe Sestak; Leonard Lance; Eliot Engel; Pete Sessions; Lois Capps.